

(WASHINGTON) – **Congressman John B. Larson** condemned House Republicans today for choosing to use the very limited time left this Congress to pursue a cheap, partisan, political attack instead of getting to work addressing the long list of important business facing the nation.

“Just this morning, House Republicans held a hearing perpetuating the Romney/Ryan myth that the President is trying to weaken welfare requirements, when in fact he is trying to strengthen them,” said Larson. “Republicans never fail to perpetuate a myth. And they never fail to forget about fact-checking. The truth is it’s not welfare that needs stricter work requirements; it’s Congress. We should stay here in Washington until we get the job done!”

Building on the Romney campaign claim that the Obama Administration is weakening welfare work requirements – which the nonpartisan Pulitzer Prize-winning PolitiFact labeled a ["pants on fire" lie](#)

– today the House Ways and Means Committee passed a bill that would give less

flexibility to governors working to help the unemployed get back to work. “As President Clinton – the author of the welfare reform law – noted last week, the Obama administration is allowing state waivers from certain specific requirements regarding welfare to work ‘only if [states] had a credible plan to increase employment by 20 percent’,” Larson added. “So, for purely political reasons, Republicans in Congress are actually opposing a 20 percent increase in employment. Clearly, they’d rather see Obama fail than the nation succeed.”

That is quite a flip for the “party of waivers”, as Ron Haskins – the Senior Welfare Advisor to President George W. Bush and Republican Ways and Means staffer for the 1996 welfare law – recently pointed out. In fact, in 1996, 99% of Republicans present and voting in the House, including Speaker Boehner, voted for the Welfare Reform law which gave the Secretary of Health and Human Services the waiver authority they are now condemning. In 2002 House Republicans, including vice-presidential candidate Paul Ryan, voted for a “super-waiver” granting states a broad range of exceptions to federal requirements, including welfare reform’s work requirement. And in 2005, [29 Republican Governors](#), including Gov. Mitt Romney, requested increased waiver authority so that states can identify ways to increase the number of Americans moving from welfare to work.

Meanwhile, the Republican controlled House, which has passed the fewest number of bills in any Congress since 1947, has a long list of critical issues that must be addressed, including the

expiration of the Farm Bill, which includes important drought relief, the upcoming fiscal cliff, and the expiration of middle class tax cuts.

“What Congress should be focused on is the work required by our oath to our constituents,” Larson concluded. “We should have a work requirement that we take up the President’s jobs bill. We should have a work requirement that we don’t let the country go off the fiscal cliff. And we should have a work requirement on House Republicans that they stay here and do their job instead of taking the next two months off to campaign.”

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